

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 Claims 1–49 (Cancelled).

1 50. (New) A printer driver for causing a computer to generate control commands for
2 driving a printer, the printer driver comprising:

3 a status store configured to store state data identifying a current state for each of
4 a number of functions of a printer;

5 a driver engine operable to generate control signals for driving a printer in accor-
6 dance with state data stored in said status store;

7 a user interface generation module for generating display data defining graphical
8 user interface displays including a plurality of graphical elements and responsive to user
9 selection of at least some of the graphical elements in generated user interface displays
10 to update data stored in said status store; and

11 an activation module for causing a modem to generate communications signals,
12 wherein said user interface generation module is responsive to user selection of a
13 predetermined graphical element of a generated user interface display to cause said acti-
14 vation module to cause a modem to generate a communications link with a remote com-
15 puter.

1 51. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 50, wherein said activation mod-
2 ule comprises a data store configured to store data indicative of a remote computer,
3 wherein said activation module is operable to cause a modem to generate a communica-
4 tions link with the remote computer identified by data stored in said data store.

1 52. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 51, wherein said data store is fur-
2 ther configured to store data indicative of the printer for which said driver engine is op-
3 erable to generate control commands, said activation module being responsive to user
4 selection of said predetermined graphical element to cause a modem to generate a

5 communications link and send a signal via the communications link for procuring a con-
6 sumable product on the basis of said stored data indicative of said printer.

1 53. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 52, wherein said consumable
2 product is ink.

1 54. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 50, further comprising:
2 a graphics store configured to store graphics data defining graphical elements to
3 be incorporated in user interface displays generated by said user interface generation
4 module;

5 wherein said graphics store is configured to store graphics data defining an im-
6 age of a consumable product for use with the printer for which said driver engine is op-
7 erable to generate control commands; and

8 wherein said user interface generation module is responsive to user selection of a
9 graphical element in a generated user interface display generated utilising said graphics
10 data from said graphics store defining an image of a consumable product to cause said
11 activation module to cause a modem to generate a communication link and sent a signal
12 via communications link for procuring said consumable product.

1 55. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 54 or claim 51, wherein the user
2 interface generation module generates the predetermined graphical element whenever
3 the printer driver is activated.

1 56. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 50, wherein said user interface
2 generation module is responsive to user selection of said predetermined graphical ele-
3 ment of the generated user interface display to cause said activation module to cause a
4 modem to generate a communications link and to send a signal via the communications
5 link for procuring a software update of said printer driver.

1 57. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 56, wherein said activation mod-
2 ule is responsive to receipt of a software update by said modem via a communications
3 link to reconfigure at least one of said driver engine, said status store, said user interface
4 generation module, and said activation module.

1 58. (New) A printer driver in accordance with claim 50 wherein:

2 said user interface generation module is operable to generate display data defin-
3 ing a plurality of different graphical user interface displays, each of which includes said
4 predetermined graphical element; and

5 said user interface generation module is responsive to user selection of said pre-
6 determined graphical element from any of said plurality of graphical user interface dis-
7 plays to cause said activation module to cause a modem to generate a communications
8 link with a remote computer.

1 59. (New) A computer system comprising:

2 a modem; and

3 a printer driver for generating control commands for driving a printer, the printer
4 driver comprising:

5 a status store configured to store state data identifying a current state for each of
6 a number of functions of a printer;

7 a driver engine operable to generate control signals for driving a printer in accor-
8 dance with state data stored in said status store;

9 a user interface generation module for generating display data defining graphical
10 user interface displays including a plurality of graphical elements and responsive to user
11 selection of at least some of the graphical elements in generated user interface displays
12 to update data stored in said status store; and

13 an activation module operable to activate said modem, wherein said user inter-
14 face generation module of said printer driver is responsive to user selection of a prede-
15 termined graphical element of a generated user interface display generated by said user

16 interface generation module to cause said activation module to activate said modem and
17 cause said modem to generate a communications link with a remote computer.

1 60. (New) A computer system in accordance with claim 59 wherein:
2 said user interface generation module is operable to generate a plurality of dif-
3 ferent graphical user interface displays, each of which includes the predetermined
4 graphical element; and
5 said user interface generation module is responsive to user selection of said pre-
6 determined graphical element from any of said plurality of graphical user interface dis-
7 plays to cause said activation module to cause a modem to generate a communications
8 link with a remote computer.

1 61. (New) A computer system in accordance with claim 59, further comprising a
2 printer operable to perform functions in accordance with control signals generated by
3 said printer driver.

1 62. (New) A computer system in accordance with claim 59 wherein said user interface
2 generation module is responsive to user selection of said predetermined graphical ele-
3 ment in a generated user interface display to cause said activation module to cause a
4 modem to generate a communications link and to send a signal via the communications
5 link for procuring a consumable product for use with said printer.

1 63. (New) A computer network comprising:
2 a computer system in accordance with claim 60;
3 a remote computer; and
4 a communications network operable to transmit communications signals between
5 said modem of said computer system and said remote computer.

1 64. (New) A computer-readable medium containing computer-executable instructions for
2 causing a programmable computer to become configured as a printer driver for generating
3 control commands for driving a printer, the printer driver comprising:

4 a status store configured to store state data identifying a current state for each of a
5 number of functions of a printer;

6 a driver engine operable to generate control signals for driving a printer in accor-
7 dance with state data stored in said status store;

8 a user interface generation module for generating display data defining graphical
9 user interface displays including a plurality of graphical elements and responsive to user se-
10 lection of at least some of the graphical elements in generated user interface displays to up-
11 date data stored in said status store; and

12 an activation module for causing a modem to generate communications signals,
13 wherein said user interface generation module of the printer driver is responsive to user se-
14 lection of a predetermined graphical element of a generated user interface display generated
15 by said user interface generation module to cause said activation module to cause a modem
16 to generate a communications link with a remote computer.